

Carmichael, William Donald, Jr. ^[1]

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by Martha B. Caldwell, 1979

28 July 1900–27 Jan. 1961



William Donald Carmichael (1900-1961).

Courtesy of the Digital North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives.

^[2]William Donald Carmichael, Jr., vice-president of [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[3], was born in [Durham](#) ^[4], one of four sons of [William Donald](#) ^[5] and Margaret McCaull Carmichael. He was educated in the [Durham](#) ^[6] public schools and served from 1918 to 1919 as a private in the [U.S. Army Air Corps](#) ^[7]. He was graduated with a degree in commerce from [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[3] in 1921. There he was an outstanding basketball player, playing on the team that won the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association Championship in 1921.

After a year of graduate work, he entered the [advertising](#) ^[8] business in New York with the Newell Emmett Agency in 1922. From 1931 to 1936 he was an associate with Campbell Starling, a member of the New York Stock Exchange. In 1936 he took on a partnership in Carmichael and Carson, New York Stock Exchange.

In 1940 he returned to Chapel Hill to serve as finance officer for the consolidated University of North Carolina. His title changed several times, but whether as finance officer, comptroller, or vice-president, he raised millions of dollars for the university from the legislature, foundations and corporations, and individuals. He served as acting president of the university in 1949–50, after [Frank Graham](#) ^[9] resigned to accept an appointment as U.S. senator.

Carmichael's work reached to all areas of the consolidated university, and his influence was felt throughout the state. He brought to his work great charm and humor, delighting in a good story. Major achievements included his work with Kay Kyser in beginning the Good Health Campaign in the state and the establishment of the four-year teaching hospital at Chapel Hill. Without public funds he brought educational television to the three campuses at [Raleigh](#) ^[10], Chapel Hill, and [Greensboro](#) ^[11]. When [John Motley Morehead](#) ^[12] gave the university the Morehead Planetarium and established a scholarship program, Carmichael aided in administering this gift.

Carmichael was chairman of the governor's Advisory Commission on Atomic Energy in 1956. He was a member of the executive committee of the Boy Scouts, the Sons of the American Revolution, Kappa Sigma, and Sigma Upsilon. He served as chairman of the Roanoke Island Historical Association and was instrumental in the reopening of the production of [The Lost Colony](#) ^[13] in 1946. He was also active in the construction of Reynolds Coliseum in Raleigh.

Carmichael married the former May Baldwin Waller on 16 Feb. 1924. The couple had two children, Margaret McCaull (Mrs. Robert) Lester and William D. III, both of Chapel Hill.

Carmichael, a Roman Catholic, was buried in the old Chapel Hill Cemetery. Memorials to him included buildings named after him on three campuses of the university: the television building in Greensboro, the gymnasium in Raleigh, and the auditorium at Chapel Hill. A portrait by C. J. Fox is in the office of the director of athletics in the auditorium at Chapel Hill.

References:

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"In Memoriam, William Donald Carmichael, Jr.," Minutes of the Board of Trustees of The University of North Carolina (Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

Nat. Cyc. Am. Biog., vol. 49 (1966).

Who's Who in the South and Southwest (1961).

Who Was Who in America, vol. 4 (1968).

Additional Resources:

William D. Carmichael, Jr., (1900-1961) and Carmichael Auditorium. The Carolina Story, UNC Libraries:
<http://museum.unc.edu/exhibits/names/carmichael-gymnasium/> [14]

William Donald Carmichael, Jr. Civil Rights Greensboro. UNC-Greensboro:
<http://library.uncg.edu/dp/crg/personbio.aspx?c=264> [15]

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